Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 221260

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR FROM NEWSOM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, IR

SUBJECT: YOUR MEETING WITH HOVEYDA

1. WE SHARE FULLY YOUR ASSESSMENT THAT POLITICAL DEVELOP-
MENT IN IRAN HAS REACHED A CRITICAL TURNING POINT. IT
SEEMS CLEAR THAT PROLONGATION OF SERIOUS URBAN VIOLENCE
IS BECOMING INTOLERABLE FOR ALL SEGMENTS OF IRANIAN SOCIETY.
THE COUNTRY FACES CHOICE BETWEEN FURTHER LIBERALIZATION
LEADING TO FREE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR OR HARSH
CRACKDOWN ON FULL SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS. IT IS
DOUBTFUL THAT LATTER COURSE, WHICH COULD CALL IN QUESTION
LOYALTY OF ARMY AND SECURITY ELEMENTS, WOULD SUCCEED FOR
MORE THAN VERY LIMITED PERIOD. THUS, OUR STRONG PREFERENCE
FOR LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IS, IN ADDITION, ONLY REAL
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ALTERNATIVE FOR GOI AT THIS JUNCTURE.

2. WE ALSO AGREE COMPLETELY WITH YOUR VIEW THAT USG SHOULD
USE ITS INFLUENCE IN APPROPRIATE WAYS TO PROMOTE LIBERALI-
ZATION PROCESS. YOU HAVE HANDLED THIS SUBJECT IN EXACTLY
THE RIGHT WAY IN YOUR TALKS WITH SHAH AND HIS ADVISERS.
WE WILL BE SEEKING OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND MEANS OF GETTING

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OUR MESSAGE ACROSS.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE HAVE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR MEETING WITH HOVEYDA:
--INFORM HIM THAT BECAUSE OF IRAN'S VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE US, EVENTS ARE BEING WATCHED WITH INTENSE INTEREST AND GENUINE SYMPATHY FOR PROBLEMS WHICH GOI FACES. WE KNOW THAT PRESIDENT, BECAUSE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP HE HAS ESTABLISHED WITH THE SHAH, WILL READ WITH KEEN INTEREST YOUR REPORTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE TRANSMITTING THE SHAH'S VIEWS.

--IN EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM, YOU MIGHT ATTEMPT TO DRAW OUT HOVEYDA -- THE OLD POLITICAL PRO -- ON STATE OF PLANNING FOR BROAD PARTICIPATION IN MAJLIS ELECTIONS. BELIEVE YOU CAN EFFECTIVELY SHOW OUR SUPPORT FOR LIBERALIZATION BY ADDING TO GENERALIZED USG ENDORSEMENT OF PROGRAM A DISPLAY OF INTEREST IN CONCRETE MEASURES BEING PLANNED.

--WE BELIEVE YOU HAVE TAKEN CORRECT APPROACH ON CANARD THAT US IS BACKING SHAH'S OPPONENTS. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO FACE THIS ASSERTION HEAD ON AND PRESS THOSE WHO RETAIL IT TO GIVE US A BILL OF PARTICULARS THAT WE CAN DEAL WITH. IF REFERENCE IS MADE TO ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND ARMS TRANSFER POLICIES, WE SHOULD PATIENTLY EXPLAIN THESE
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ARE GLOBAL POLICIES AND IRAN IS NOT BEING SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION. OUR PRESENT INCLINATION IS THAT THIS ISSUE IS BEST HANDLED BY YOU AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT ENGAGE THE PRESIDENT, THEREBY GIVING CHARGE GREATER STATURE THAN IT DESERVES. WE BELIEVE THAT HOVEYDA, WHO IS BOTH POLITICALLY SAVVY AND WILL BE FRANK, WILL BE YOUR MOST USEFUL INTERLOCUTOR ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REPORT OF CONVERSATION AND ANY ADDITIONAL VIEWS YOU MAY HAVE ON TACTICS. WARM REGARDS, DAVE. CHRISTOPHER

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